



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor
Robert Morgan
Executive Director
Lowell P. Braxton
Division Director

1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210
PO Box 145801
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801
801-538-5340
801-359-3940 (Fax)
801-538-7223 (TDD)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2002

MINING COMPANIES TO BE HONORED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

Several Utah mining companies have demonstrated a willingness to go beyond what is required by regulation to protect the environment, and will be recognized for that mindset on April 24, 2002. The Utah Board of Oil, Gas and Mining will present 2002 Earth Day Awards to Interstate Brick Company and Peck Rock and Products, Kennecott Utah Copper Corporation, and West Ridge Resources. The awards will be presented at 8:30 a.m. in the auditorium of the Utah Department of Natural Resources, 1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah.

“The public does not often hear about companies that go the extra mile in protecting the environment while providing us with the natural resources essential to maintaining our quality of life,” explained Board Chairman Elise Erler. “That’s why we created Earth Day Awards, and we’re pleased to recognize these operators for their commitment to protecting the environment.”

Interstate Brick Company and Peck Rock and Products have operated the Powell Clay Mine in Utah County since 1985. Reclamation plans for the mine did not include complete reduction of a highwall. However, an encroaching residential subdivision presented safety concerns and Interstate Brick and Peck Rock and Products voluntarily accelerated reclamation, and completely eliminated a 60 to 80 foot tall highwall, reducing it to a gentle slope and seeding it.

Kennecott Utah Copper operates the oldest large-scale open pit mining operation in the world at Bingham Canyon. About 5,500 acres surrounding the pit have been covered with waste rock. Much of this waste rock releases acidity, sulfate and metals when exposed to weather, presenting unique challenges to reclamation and water quality.

Once considered unreclaimable, Kennecott initiated several key studies, then proceeded to take action to optimize reclamation and water management activities to reduce the impact of waste rock on the environment. Based upon the success of this work Kennecott now envisions reclamation on most waste rock surfaces.

While developing a coal mine in “C” Canyon in Carbon County, West Ridge Resources devised innovative methods and an experimental practice to preserve the natural configuration of a drainage channel through the canyon. Because the mine was constructed with an eye toward eventual reclamation, this experimental method will greatly enhance final reclamation.

West Ridge abandoned the usual methods of destroying the channel, installing a culvert, and then rebuilding the natural channel during reclamation. Instead, West Ridge Resources preserved the basic structure of the canyon using a geotextile covering over the top of the channel. A culvert was laid on this geotextile and covered with fill. Upon reclamation West Ridge will remove the fill, the culvert, and the bedding material, to reveal the channel in its original configuration.

The Board of Oil, Gas and Mining has presented Earth Day Awards to operators since 1991. The essential requirement for receiving an award is that a company must voluntarily perform work that is not required by law. Since that time 37 mining and oil and gas companies have been singled out for their environmental awareness.

###

For more information contact:
Jim Springer (801) 538-5324